



Rhode Island Department of Health
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www.health.ri.gov

Immunization Program Update

Date: September 9, 2008
To: Influenza Vaccine Providers
From: Patricia Raymond, Chief, Office of Immunization
Re: **2008-2009 Influenza Season Vaccine Updates**

PEDIATRIC INFLUENZA PROGRAM

Earlier this year, the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) issued new recommendations to expand routine influenza (flu) vaccination to include all children ages 6 months-18 years of age (both high-risk and healthy). As always, RI is committed to offering all recommended vaccines and has ordered adequate supplies of flu vaccine to vaccinate all RI children.

Pediatric providers should begin placing vaccine requests now. To order, use the **2008-09 Pediatric Influenza Order Report** form located in the provider information section of our website at www.health.ri.gov/immunization/providers.php (The report is the first item listed in the *Policies and Procedures for Vaccine Storage and Handling* section of this page and is available as a pdf or as a spreadsheet.) FluMist (intranasal) vaccine is ready to be shipped now and can be ordered for healthy patients 2-18 years of age. We expect that providers will receive their first shipment of injectable vaccine by October 1st. For questions, contact Mark Francesconi (222-5988 or mark.francesconi@health.ri.gov) or Paul McKiernan (222-4639 or paul.mckiernan@health.ri.gov).

ADULT INFLUENZA PROGRAM

The 2008-2009 season marks the second year of RI's adult influenza program. Flu vaccine will be distributed at no cost to providers who have already enrolled in the program. The adult flu program covers patients age 19 years and older. We expect that providers will receive their first shipment of vaccine by October 1st. For questions, contact Virginia Paine (222-7681 or Virginia.paine@health.ri.gov) or Deborah Porrazzo (222-7876 or Deborah.Porrazzo@health.ri.gov).

The 2008 ACIP influenza prevention recommendations are available at: www.cdc.gov/vaccines/pubs/ACIP-list.htm. In response to the anticipated increased demand for flu vaccine for children and adults, we are collaborating with key partners on several initiatives to promote vaccination in a variety of settings. Important dates ahead include:

- **October 6th: Start Date for Public Flu Clinics**

All providers, facilities and mass immunizers will receive a sufficient quantity of vaccine so they can schedule vaccination clinics beginning on or after this date. For more information about public flu clinics or to refer patients, go to www.health.ri.gov or call the Flu Hotline at 1-800-555-7858.

- **November 1st: Statewide Flu Vaccination Day**

HEALTH is working with providers and other partners to promote an opportunity to vaccinate a large volume of patients in one day – helping to maximize limited staffing resources and vaccinating before families come together for the holidays. We hope to make this event an annual statewide celebration of flu immunization for kids and adults and to educate everybody about the value of vaccines. *Flu Vaccination Day* has been endorsed by several RI partners including: the American Academy of Pediatrics, American Academy of Family Practitioners, RI Medical Society, RI Family Physician's Access Alliance and the Ocean State Adult Immunization Coalition. If you plan to participate or for more information, contact Kathy Marceau (222-4624 or kathy.marceau@health.ri.gov). CDC offers several resources to help promote flu vaccination efforts at www.cdc.gov/flu/.

- **December 8-14: National Influenza Vaccination Week**

This national awareness week is designed to highlight the importance of continuing flu vaccination through the months of December, January and beyond.